

socialist standard

October 2014
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Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement

Ballots not bullets

Why the revolution can be non-violent



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Introducing The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make

new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we

will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.



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Editorial

The Scottish referendum

WHATEVER THE outcome, capitalism was going to continue and with it the problems it inevitably generates as a system that puts, and has to put, profits before meeting people's needs. Whether this is done from London or from Edinburgh makes no difference. An independent Scotland would be capitalist just as much as if it remained part of the UK.

Nevertheless, from a purely political point of view, the Yes campaign was demanding a far-reaching change, well beyond the mere change of government or local council that's usually at stake in elections. It was demanding the break-up of one of the longest-established capitalist states and one that had once been the dominant power in the world. So it was a decision that could be described as "historic" in the sense that it could have affected the future course of history. People in Scotland realised this. Which is why 9 out of 10 of the population aged 16 and over came out and voted.

As socialists, who advocate the use of the ballot box in the course of the socialist revolution, we are comforted by this as it bears out our contention that when there is perceived to be something really important at stake, people will vote.

To continue for a moment the analogy between the Yes campaign and the movement for socialism. The Yes campaign did represent a threat to the interests of the British ruling class. A breakaway by Scotland would weaken them in the struggle between states over economic issues that is built-in to the capitalist world system. Capitalist Britain would not only be diminished in size but also in diplomatic status and clout.

Some argue that, faced with a threat like this, a ruling

class will resort to force as the British ruling class did when Ireland tried to break away in 1919. This time they pursued a different strategy. When it appeared that, despite their earlier calculations, the Yes side might actually win they bent over backwards to offer more powers to the Scottish parliament in a bid to buy off the movement.

We suggest that this is the more likely reaction of a ruling class to a growing socialist movement committed to using the ballot box and enjoying widespread support. Not that it would work. In fact it didn't work in Scotland. Those supporting Yes refused (as the socialist movement would) to be bribed and change their intended vote. Those in the No camp continued in their resolve to vote No, largely no doubt because they felt that there was no point in taking the unnecessary risk and disruption that a Yes victory would involve.

That was understandable. The partisans of independence were painting an unbelievable picture of how life would be so much better if Scotland was no longer ruled from Westminster. A social democratic paradise was to be established in Scotland. Reformism, despite failing to do so on every previous occasion it has been tried, would somehow be able this time to make capitalism work for the benefit for wage and salary workers and their dependents. Socialists didn't believe this either.

The trouble is that politics is now going to be as boring as before as the professional politicians, North and South of the border, wrangle over purely constitutional matters while capitalism and the problems it causes continue.

The Dark Rebellion

10 YEARS ago this month the British worker Ken Bigley was murdered in a video beheading by the leader of an Iraqi insurgency group, one Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, despite appeals and interventions from, among others, Yasser Arafat, King Abdullah of Jordan, the Muslim Council of Britain, the Republic of Ireland, Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams and even Libyan dictator Colonel Gaddafi.

Zarqawi's group affiliated to Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda network at this same time, and became known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The following year, 2005, Zarqawi received a letter from Bin Laden's military commander, Ayman al-Zawahiri, outlining al-Qaeda's four-stage strategic plan for expanding the Iraq war. The stages were, first, expel the Americans and their allies, then establish an Islamic caliphate, widen the conflict to engulf neighbouring states, and finally declare war on Israel.

Zarqawi continued to run AQI, specialising in extortion, kidnappings, hotel bombings and hostage beheadings, until a US Air Force F-16 dropped 460kg of high explosive on his safehouse in 2006. AQI lived on, however, and the same year merged with several other groups to form the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI).

AQI thereafter became increasingly unpopular because of its targeting of Iraqi civilians, and open war developed between AQI and other Sunni groups. Bin Laden himself was said to regard the brutality of AQI's video beheadings as counter-productive, and his commander, Zawahiri, had also criticised Zarqawi for recklessly squandering civilian sympathy and support. The US in 2007 began arming rival Sunni militias who agreed to fight AQI instead of the Americans (*Guardian*, 12 June 2007). This resulted in the 'Anbar Awakening' of Sunni counter-attacks, and by 2008 the ISI described itself as being in a state of 'extraordinary crisis'.

With the withdrawal of US troops in 2009, AQI's fortunes started to pick up again. They began blowing up government offices in a bid to destroy the Iraqi administration and sabotage the 2010 elections. But they hit problems again as communications with al-Qaeda in Pakistan were cut and, it was estimated, around 80 percent of their leadership were captured or blown up.

But like the mythical Hydra, AQI could grow heads as well as cut them off. The new leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, began recruiting Saddam Hussein's former military staff, and thereafter pursued an energetic campaign of highly successful prison breaks to free veteran insurgents held at, among other places, the infamous Abu Ghraib prison.

And then, the Arab Spring fell upon Baghdadi like manna from heaven. Suddenly the regional strongmen who were able to contain and maintain regional stability fell or were in trouble. Baghdadi seized the moment and began planting ISI seeds in Syria which sprouted into the al-Nusra Front. This Syrian group, unlike ISI, was not interested in establishing caliphates but only in ousting Assad, and recruited its foreign fighters solely on this basis. In April 2013 Baghdadi announced, without consulting either al-Nusra or al-Qaeda, that al-Nusra and ISI were merging as the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (Isis or Isil). It was the equivalent of a hostile business merger, and the al-Nusra Front leader protested vociferously. Al-Qaeda promptly ruled against Baghdadi and ordered Isis to be disbanded. After months of argument, al-Qaeda got nowhere and severed all connections with Isis. After more months of internecine conflict, al-Qaeda resignedly told al-Nusra to stop fighting Isis. Elements of al-Nusra subsequently saw no option but to go over to Isis, as did parts of the Free Syrian Army, JMA and other anti-Assad groups. In June this year Isis declared itself a caliphate with Baghdadi as its caliph.

The brutality of what followed has been of biblical proportions. The Islamic State rolled over Mosul and cleared out its bank vaults, while crucifying opponents and non-Sunni Muslims, eviscerating women and reputedly executing children and putting their heads on spikes on Mosul Park. The West has looked on aghast at the scale of the atrocities.

Despite its chilling barbarity the Islamic State seems to know what it's doing. With an estimated fund of US\$2m it is building all the infrastructure of a new state with efficiently-functioning public services and administrative and military control systems amid continued revenues from robbing banks, ransoming hostages and allegedly, selling captured Syrian energy supplies back to the Syrian government. It is noted for its unusually professional management of social media and even its harrowing beheading videos, clearly a key part of its conception of asymmetric warfare, are described as looking increasingly slick and well-produced. It employs if not 'awe' then certainly 'shock' in its campaign to subdue opposition and deter western and regional powers from intervening.

Some commentators speculate that the brutality is so excessive that the world's Muslim communities will recoil from it, if they haven't already done so, forcing IS towards moderating its behaviour in the future. But this is the legacy of the killer of Ken Bigley ten years ago, and they didn't get where they are today by being moderate.

A recent edition of *New Scientist* (13 September) carried two articles that bear on the subject. In the first, *Lifting the black mask*, academics have been demanding access to US intelligence data as part of studies to establish the factors which go towards radicalising western-based jihadists. Some conclusions are already in, however, in particular that the idea of jihadists being 'brainwashed' by recruiters or radical imams is wrong. These young people who go to fight for Isis have simply absorbed and applied the views of their own circle of friends and family. Socialists say that capitalism, in oppressing workers everywhere, spontaneously assists the spread of socialist ideas. What we also have to acknowledge is that capitalism is also fostering a 'dark rebellion' which is, in many ways, the antithesis of everything that socialism stands for. Capitalism plays the same hateful pop song on an endless loop, while socialists aim to press Fast Forward, but there are also those who are keen to press Fast Rewind, all the way back to the Middle Ages.

The second article concerns a reappraisal of two notorious and now considered unethical psychology studies, which now suggests that acts of deliberate cruelty are not perpetrated as a matter of routine by ordinary people who are 'just following orders', an argument known as the Nuremberg Defence, but only by individuals who can be characterised as 'committed' believers.

In the 1960s series of 'shock' obedience studies conducted at Yale by Stanley Milgram, it turns out that participants were regularly badgered to administer electric shocks, and that up to 50 percent refused, while in the 1971 Stanford prison experiment, participant 'guards' were heavily coached to mistreat 'prisoners' by having forms of mistreatment suggested to them. In both studies participants were repeatedly told to conform and obey 'in the interests of science'. The reappraisal suggests that those who bought into this formulation of the 'science ethic' tended to conform, while 'non-believers' did not.

Capitalist ideology loves to demonise 'human nature', and media reports of torture and murder barely seen outside the Old Testament seem almost to justify that demonisation. But we don't just do what we're told, like mindless zombies. It matters what we believe. Whatever excesses the world's unhinged fanatics manage to drive themselves to, the capacity for evil does not, after all, lie dormant in the banal heart of humanity.

PJS

Scotch myth?

Dear Editors

Regrettably 'Myths of Scottish Nationalism' (*Socialist Standard*, August) ended on a low note as no matter how flawed nationalism is, it is not responsible for the prevailing opinion that the Covenanters were freedom fighters. It is a widely held view.

The current SNP would be strange bedfellows with a Covenanting movement, as according to Professor Alan MacInnes the Covenanters had a radical view of Britain that was federal and constitutional.

The article commented on the Battle of Bothwell Bridge, omitting that the majority of Covenanters there made public declaration that they wanted a free General Assembly and free Parliament. The monument to the battle, which was erected by public subscription, is quite clear that the Covenanters stood for Civil and Religious Liberty.

What resulted from the sacrifice and sufferings of so many ordinary Scots and others was not an inquisition but a democratic Church that was acceptable to the majority, a free Parliament and a Bill of Rights that gave us liberties and freedoms much in advance of the rest of Europe. These were the foundations on which our democracy has evolved. That Bill of Rights was a foundation stone for the evolution of our European Human Rights, which ensures liberty of expression and assembly for minority political and religious groups. Fortunately history shows that totalitarian systems are doomed to failure be it long or short term.

David Bryce, Hamilton.

Reply:

The purpose of the series was to demonstrate that a Scottish national history is invented and the image presented of the Covenanter movement is one such an example. The Covenanter Movement was not a unified movement and was riven by schisms, not unlike the current Islamic Movement but, for sure, the article was not making the claim that the SNP's and its nationalism are the legitimate heirs to the Covenanters. It is possible to argue that the details of the 1707 Union fulfilled much of the Covenanter demands and ended any future of the Scottish Kirk being the base for radicalism, its low point, a call for the deportation of Irish catholic immigrants during the 1930s.

As the article acknowledged, there are many who argue that the Covenanters were progressive and revolutionary but by no means is it a universal endorsement, as you would seem to suggest. Gerard Cairns on the Scottish Republican Socialist Movement website, arguing from a 'catholic gael' perspective, could write:

'It may seem very Marxist to argue that the Covenanters were class warriors, a mass movement against an absolutist regime. That really would be an example of the mechanical Marxism which tries to hammer a square peg into a round hole. Can we really turn bigots into revolutionaries? ...A movement from below led by pedagogues on high who wanted a monolithic Scotland and/or Britain based on Presbyterianism. Everything else was secondary.' (www.scottishrepublicansocialistmovement.org/Pages/)

Airbrushed

Dear Editors

On 12th July at Sheffield Anarchist Bookfair the Communist Workers Organisation (CWO) held a meeting titled 'The only war which is worth fighting is the class war'. The subject was the First World War and at 8 minutes 21 seconds in, the speaker representing the CWO stated 'I won't go into the various British ones today but the only group – and it was a group rather than an organisation – that can claim to have had any real anti-war policy completely was the Socialist Labour Party'.

In *Revolutionary Perspectives* issue 4 (Journal of the CWO) dated Summer 2014, the article 'Social Democracy, the First World War and the Working-class in Britain' starting on page 14 discusses 'The Response of Socialists in Britain' even discussing the Socialist Labour Party (De Leonist) on page 18.

For all the CWO airbrushing of consistent SPGB opposition to the First World War, it is ironic the same CWO speaker once debated the SPGB accusing the SPGB of being 'schooled in Stalinism'.

Jon D. White (by email)

Reply:

Strange indeed, and for two reasons. The first being the clear and principled opposition to the war from the SPGB (on the basis that it was a capitalist war and not in the slightest about the interests of the working class). Second, the SLP was split into two factions, one pro-war, the other anti-war (with articles in their paper *The Socialist* reflecting this division at the start of the conflict). It was only some months into the war that the anti-war faction won out and the SLP clearly stated its opposition to the slaughter. We know that the CWO as 'left communists' venerate the SLP because after the conflict the majority of its membership left to join the pro-Bolshevik Communist Party of Great Britain at its foundation, but the SLP's attitude to the war has been well documented and there is no excuse for such shoddy historical revisionism. – Editors.

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Gullibility: Any Known Cure?

As this goes to press the number of known deaths due to the West African Ebola outbreak – for which there is, as yet, no known cure has passed the 2,630 mark. The number of infections is put at over 5,300 although many more are suspected to be going undetected. By the time you read it the statistics will be much worse.

Unless, of course, in the meantime God steps in with a miracle to sort it out – which, presumably, he could if he wanted to. He did, after all, in the case of Dr Kent Brantly. Brantly, an American medical missionary working in Liberia is one of the fortunate ones who, after contacting the disease, made a full recovery. 'God saved my life' he assured a press conference after being released from hospital.

The way God did this, it seems, is by arranging for Brantly to be one of the first to receive the very scarce and experimental serum known as Zmapp, and whisking him back to a modern hospital in the US where he received another dose, and the best possible medical care available.

How effective the Zmapp was in his cure we can only guess at this stage, or what Dr Brantly's views of it are, but he is in no doubt that it was God who saved his life. Why did God single out Dr Brantly to be saved, we might wonder? Why didn't he carry out a similar miracle for some, at least, of the other 2,630 victims, including many other committed medical volunteers? Why was it necessary for God to allow the outbreak to occur in the first place? Maybe Dr Brantly knows the answer to these questions, maybe he doesn't, but of one thing he is absolutely certain. 'God saved my life'.

To assist God in carrying out further miracles of this sort another, more unorthodox, treatment for Ebola has been prescribed by 'Prophet' T B Joshua, one of Nigeria's five wealthiest preachers. Prophet Joshua, whose fortune has been estimated at between 10 and 15 million dollars by *Forbes* magazine (although that sum is dwarfed by others on the list), has flown 4,000 bottles of his amazing 'holy anointing water' to Sierra Leone for use in treating the Ebola virus.

This magical water which is produced at his church's headquarters is obviously potent stuff. It is more usually taken among his followers for the treatment of such complaints as barrenness, cancer, paralysis and the AIDS virus, although one even confirms that whilst being attacked in his car one night by ten armed bandits his car suddenly became bulletproof and he

was saved. You'd give a fortune to get your hands on a bottle of that wouldn't you? Well, some people obviously do.

'By using the anointing water, you are symbolically setting yourself apart for Jesus Christ's special attention as you pray in faith' he says. 'I mean, you are positioned for mercy, favour, healing, deliverance blessing, prosperity and fruitfulness'. And it sounds good, you must admit, especially the 'prosperity and fruitfulness' bit.

However, there may be a snag. It's guaranteed to work of course – as long as you 'pray in faith', but as with all religious guarantees, if the punter doesn't have the required amount of faith – well, that could bummer the whole miracle up.

And it's even been suggested by some, who obviously have nowhere near enough faith in Joshua and his Jesus juice, that it is simply salt water. Obviously this is an outrageous slur. No multi-millionaire preacher would ever carry out such a scam would they?

Hopefully he does provide full instructions for use with the magic liquid though. You obviously need to know whether to drink it or pour it into your car's radiator. It's all very well making your old banger bulletproof, but if it's saltwater you're pouring in, it could corrode the cooling system internals and make it leak like a bloody sieve. Not exactly the kind of holiness you want in your radiator.

NW



John Bird rehabilitates World War One

John Bird, founder of *The Big Issue*, has rewritten history in his article *The Necessary War* (4-10 August) which states 'the First World War was an imperative conflict for Britain and France to fight as Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany would have propelled Europe back to the Dark Ages.' It is an essay full of 1914 anti-German propaganda.

He identifies the Kaiser 'with a withered arm' as a reason for Germany starting the war. Bird writes that 'it would have been an absolute disaster for Germany to have won the First World War.' This the country that brought us Goethe, Beethoven, and Hegel. He writes Germany would 'turn Europe into an Africa; open for rape and pillage and plundering' which is ridiculous. Britain declared war ostensibly to defend neutral Belgium which had committed atrocities in the Congo Free State where natives were maimed and slaughtered for profit.

Bird dismisses the idea of 'generals who from the comfort of their officers clubs sent the masses to their death! Over the top and into oblivion' culturally epitomised in *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *Blackadder Goes Forth*. What about Haig's contempt for the working class evident in his diary entry 'mostly gamekeepers and servants' after hearing 13,000 men were killed in three hours during a battle.

He makes the ludicrous assertion that Napoleon caused the First World War. We know the 'Great Man' theory of history but Bird surely needs a dose of the Materialist Conception of History. The war was the outcome of decades of competing capitalist interests, the fact that the predominance of British and French capitalism was being challenged by Germany, French hurt pride over the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, and Britain's determination to halt German access to the oilfields of the Persian Gulf. Bird needs to take a history lesson.

His article was an insult to the homeless people who sell his magazine. Fortunately the same issue carried our advertisement stating that 'we oppose all leadership, all war.'

SPC





More ... and more

THE PRE-WWI US labour union boss Samuel Gompers was once asked what unions wanted. He replied with a single word – 'more.' It was a good answer since that's basically what unions are about: more money, from employers, to enable their members to live a little better under capitalism. They don't always get this and in slump conditions have to be satisfied with aiming to get 'not so much less'.

It's actually a better slogan than a 'fair' or a 'decent' wage since there's nothing fair or decent about being forced by economic necessity, as most people are under capitalism, to sell their mental and physical energies to some employer for a wage or a salary. That's wage slavery and it can never be fair however much more workers get paid.

On 18 October the TUC is organising a national demonstration in London under the slogan 'Britain needs a pay rise'. It's a silly slogan, designed presumably to show that unions don't just have their members' interest at heart but also that of the country. But 'Britain' is not a united community with a common interest. It's a class-divided society in which the 'national interest' is the interest of the dominant capitalist class. They, not workers, are Britain.

So, what the TUC has ended up doing is trying to convince the capitalist class that it is in their interest to increase wages. This is not self-evident, otherwise they would already have done so without the TUC needing to ask them.

The TUC's argument is that 'getting money back into people's pockets is essential to securing a strong recovery.' This is to assume that the capitalist economy is driven by what workers buy. It isn't. It's driven by what capitalist firms invest with a view to profit. What workers can buy is a by-product of this since the more capitalist firms invest, the more workers are employed and so the more in total that workers can buy. As Marx put it, 'if productive capital grows, the demand for labour grows. It therefore increases the price of labour-power, wages' (*Wage Labour and Capital*, ch. VI).

In any event, what the TUC is concentrating on demanding is an end to too low pay. They want the minimum wage enforced more strictly and 'higher wages from employers who can afford to pay', explaining:

'We know that in many low paid sectors employers could afford to pay more without making job losses. That's why we need new ways for unions and employers to work together to set higher wages, so that workers and businesses both get a fair deal.'

It would be nice to think that this was just a ploy to get the employers concerned to pay more. Unfortunately the TUC probably believe it and do want a 'fair deal' for businesses as well as workers. A fair year's profits for a fair day's wage! In that respect they would agree with another of Gompers' sayings, that 'the worst crime against working people is a company which fails to operate at a profit.'

Workers do need more but not just more money to live under capitalism. A lot more. The whole means of production in fact so that these can be used to turn out what people need instead of to make a profit for those who monopolise them. That will mean the end of the system of working for wages and its replacement by the application of the principle 'from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs.'

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Desperately seeking - safety



Manus Island Detention Centre

RACISM AND xenophobia are not specifically Australian personality traits, for racism isn't biological or innate. It was created to rationalise and justify slavery and colonialism, exploiting pseudo-science to persuade people that racial superiority is natural. There is nothing natural about it. The attitude of today's government contrasts with the reception given to the Vietnamese boat-people in the 70s and 80s. Back then, Australia honoured its obligation as a signatory to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The 2006 census recorded 173,663 Australian people of Vietnamese ancestry who were first or second generation Australians. The logistics of accommodating newcomers is something that Australia has repeatedly demonstrated it is capable of achieving.

Hamid Kehazaei, a young Iranian asylum seeker, has been declared brain-dead following his emergency medical evacuation from the Manus island detention centre. Dr Peter Young, the former director of mental health services at IHMS and one of the most senior doctors working in immigration detention, explained he would not be surprised if there were delays to Kehazaei's medical care.

'Whenever people are placed in a remote place like this, where there isn't access to local services on the ground, it inevitably creates a situation in which there are going to be delays when people have deteriorating conditions and when higher level, tertiary care is required. That's just a characteristic of being in a remote location and that's leaving aside the issues of the logistics when someone needs to be moved out and the bureaucratic delays when approval needs to be sought through multiple agencies' (theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/03/).

Draconian immigration policies are increasingly being imposed by various countries around the world. Australia detains refugees who arrive by boat to seek political asylum on Christmas Island and in camps in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. Australian governments, both Liberal and Labour parties, have demonised boat people for 15 years, defying international law.

Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the new United Nations high commissioner for human rights, accused Australia of causing human rights violations through its policy of detaining asylum seekers offshore:

'Australia's policy of offshore processing for asylum seekers arriving by sea, and its interception and turning back of vessels, is leading to a chain of human rights violations, including arbitrary detention and possible torture following return to home countries. It could also lead to the resettlement of migrants in countries that are not adequately equipped... Human rights are not reserved for citizens only, or for people with visas. They are the inalienable rights of every individual, regardless of his or her location and migration status,' he declares (*Sidney Morning Herald*, 7 September).

Admiral Chris Barrie, responsible for border protection under the Howard government, said the demonising of asylum seekers in Australia's detention centres was a central concern for him:

'I'm not sure we should continue to use the term 'mandatory detention' when we actually mean jail. At least in Australian jails the incarcerated have rights of access to legal support and representation. In these jails no such rights exist.' He continued: 'Australians are doing their utmost to extinguish hope, the most powerful of human emotions' (*Sidney Morning Herald*, 4 September).

Why do some Australians 'hate' asylum seekers? Many are led to believe they are one of society's biggest problems. Little wonder. The media claims Australia is under siege from asylum seekers and they are blamed for higher taxes, increasing crime, rising house prices, longer hospital waits, cheap labour, as well as terrorism and disease. Mainstream politicians promote such stories.

Even if all the boats were stopped, even if they were all sent back into Indonesian waters, even if all asylum seekers were locked up in detention camps situated in puppet countries, none of that would increase wages or pensions, increase the numbers of nurses and doctors in public hospitals, make the education system any better, or make more affordable housing available. The campaign against asylum seekers won't lead to a single affordable house, a single hospital or a single school being built. Everybody knows this deep down, yet asylum seekers are the scapegoat for the ignorant and aggrieved. It is a campaign of fear to cover-up the failures of capitalism.

ALJO



Clashing in Clacton

JAYWICK IS a village on the Essex coast with a stretch of golden sand. Built in 1928, it originally consisted of 'chalets' but these developed as permanent residences and the occasional holiday retreat for anyone who was in employment permanent enough for them to afford a week away to recover from That War followed by The Slump. For many it was as close to paradise as they were likely to get. But it is all different now, for Jaywick has fallen to the lower layers of poverty and decay. In 2011 a survey by the Department of Communities and Local Government stated that on the basis of poverty, crime, education, unemployment and housing it was the most deprived area in England. There is a lack of street lighting and pavements and what were parades of shops are now wastelands – empty and vandalised. It is part of the genteel Parliamentary constituency of Clacton, which was represented by the Conservative Douglas Carswell until August, when he changed to UKIP and stood down from Parliament with the stated intention of contesting the resulting by-election there.

Sofa Clique

Clacton was created as a parliamentary constituency for the 2010 election, when Carswell had a majority of 12,088. In common with a number of coastal towns, it has a higher proportion of retired people and a lesser number of those classified as 'non-white'. Votes there are cast defensively; local polls confirm support for Carswell's stand against British membership of the EU, for restricting the inflow of immigrants and longer prison sentences for repeat offenders... all of which add up to Clacton being a hopeful place for a UKIP candidate. Among the polls the Conservative Home website predicted that Carswell would get some 56 per cent of the by-election vote as against only 24 per cent for the Tory candidate, for he promised to change things: 'Our politics is dominated by politicians. It's all about them, not the people they are supposed to answer to... First under Tony Blair, then Gordon Brown, now David Cameron, it's all about the priorities of whichever tiny clique happens to be sitting on the sofa in Downing Street. Different clique, same sofa . . . They seek every great office, yet believe in so little'.

Someone Special

Carswell is well experienced in this matter of aiming for a place on that sofa. He first contested an election in 2001, at none other than Sedgefield where Tony Blair was the Member. At the time, before Iraq and the infamous lies, there was something of a slump in the popularity of that Labour government and Carswell reduced Blair's majority by 7,500. And then in 2005, after a spell in David Cameron's office, he stood for Harwich and turned out the sitting Labour MP by 920 votes. In 2007 he was a joint- author of *Direct Democracy an agenda for a new model party*, which led *The Spectator* to include him among '...the brightest young Conservative thinkers'. In the *Sunday Times* in July 2008 he was hailed as '...

one of the energetic young Tory modernisers elected to the Commons in 2005' and in the following year the *Daily Telegraph* named him as 'the Parliamentarian of the Year'. All of which, with his increasing majority in Clacton, entitled Carswell to regard himself as someone with real prospects. But every day, in so many ways, the arrogance of politicians with their bogus 'principles', their superficial 'energy', their 'modernising' is exposed to us. How does Carswell match up to this?

No Primary

After the 2010 election the Coalition agreement promised to introduce a system whereby the voters select candidates in primary elections. Carswell stated his support for this reform, in the so-called *Contract With Britain*. Which would have been more convincing if he had applied the system in his own case. But when he moved from the Tory Party to UKIP and resigned as an MP he said he would stand again without any mention of a primary election. Instead the matter was subject to the system he professes to despise; in fact it was even more closed – privately settled with Nigel Farage during a cosy meal in a discreet Mayfair restaurant. This took no account of the fact that there was already a selected UKIP candidate – Roger Lord, a local farmer who had been a member of UKIP since 1997. Lord complained bitterly about being elbowed aside, to the extent that he more or less removed himself from all political activity of whatever party.

Expenses

If there were ever any doubts about Carswell's resolve to make his name – and ensure himself a place further up the Greasy Pole – they would have been stilled by what the *Daily Mail* called his 'fearless' call for the Speaker of the House of Commons Michael Martin to be dismissed for his resistance to a more open system in the matter of the MPs' expenses. In May 2009 Carswell's motion of no confidence led to Martin resigning from the chair, pleading that this was 'for the sake of unity'. But Carswell himself was not backward in the scandal, for his campaign against MPs' sleaze (he complained that their standing had 'never been so low') did not prevent him being one of those imaginative claimants for 'expenses'. He began by designating a £1 million flat in London as his second home before flipping to a £335,000 house in Essex. This was followed by his claims for furniture and equipment which between 2007 and 2009 cost some £32,000. He claimed £429 for gardening and then, perhaps to reveal himself as someone with an eye for detail, 74p for a washing line from Tesco. But above all else was a £655 *Maximus* love seat 'in deep moss brushed cotton with extra fabric protector' for use when he moved in with his future wife.

We are fully accustomed to the sprouting of some smaller third party urging us to vote them into power because they are cleaner, more honest and reliable than the two big ones with their playing elections as a kind of gruesome Musical Chairs. We remember David Steel and his Liberals, Roy Jenkins and his SDP. Now we have Farage and his strangely impulsive, self-incriminating lot. The signs are that come 9 November Carswell will be their first MP. But all the evidence says that he should not let this excite him into any further delusions. Which also goes for those who vote for him.

IVAN



Douglas Carswell

Nonviolent Revolution: A Contradiction in Terms?

Many assume that bringing capitalism to an end will require violence. But workers can paralyze the capitalist class without firing a shot.

Revolution is often equated with violence. William Morris addressed this misconception nicely in 'How We Live, and How We Might Live', where he explained that:

'The word Revolution, which we Socialists are so often forced to use, has a terrible sound in most people's ears, even when we have explained to them that it does not necessarily mean a change accompanied by riot and all kinds of violence, and cannot mean a change made mechanically and in the teeth of opinion by a group of men who have somehow managed to seize on the executive power for the moment'.

And 130 years later most still assume that revolution *necessarily* is accompanied by violence, and that a 'nonviolent revolution' is a contradiction in terms.

The Ted offensive

In an article published last year, the radical political cartoonist Ted Rall puts forth the basic argument so often used to defend violent revolution:

'The privileged classes won't relinquish their privileges, power or wealth voluntarily. They will use their control over the police and the military . . . in order to crush any meaningful opposition. They are violent. Their system *is* violence. Defeating them requires greater violence. Nothing less results in revolution' ('Not a Revolution, Just an Old-fashioned Coup').

Rall insists that nonviolence is ineffective for a revolutionary movement and historically unprecedented, as he notes in his criticism of the Occupy movement in the same article:

'At the height of the Occupy movement during the fall of 2011, many knee-jerk pacifists, besotted with the post-1960s religion of militant nonviolence (in spite of its repeatedly proven ineffectiveness), agreed that radical transformation — revolution — was necessary in the United States. Yet these liberals also argued that (even though there was no historical precedent) the triumph of the mass of ordinary American workers over the corrupt bankers and their pet politicians could result from purely nonviolent

protest'.

Rall actually makes a number of good points in his article, arguing against 'Western analysts, liberals and even leftists' who have 'cheapened the word "revolution", attaching it to developments that . . . are nothing of the kind'; whereas a true revolution is 'a vast set of radical transformations in the way that ordinary people live'. 'You can't make a revolution without revolutionizing society', he writes, 'which requires the complete violent overthrow of the ruling class'.

But is it necessary for him to insist so strongly on the *violent* nature of this transformation? Is it true that violence is an essential aspect of revolution? Is the use of nonviolent tactics among revolutionaries ineffective and historically unprecedented?

The power of nonviolence?

Nonviolent tactics would seem particularly ill-suited for any movement facing an authoritarian regime armed to the teeth. Here, at least, the arguments in favor of violent revolution would seem persuasive. But an article published in the July/August issue of *Foreign Affairs*, titled 'Drop Your Weapons: When and Why Civil Resistance Works', argues that even in such situations collective nonviolent resistance can be very effective.

The authors of the article, Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, are hardly revolutionaries: Chenoweth is an academic and Stephan a 'strategic planner' for the State Department. And the magazine is pure 'establishment'; published by the Council on Foreign Relations, an organization that seeks to 'promote understanding of foreign policy and America's role in the world'.

Not surprisingly, then, many of the examples of violent and nonviolent movements that the authors examine concern 'regimes' that the US government has sought to topple. Far from objecting to this meddling foreign policy, Chenoweth and Stephan simply think that supporting nonviolent movements can be more effective in many cases than backing armed conflict.

In any case, their article begins with some statistics about how 'campaigns of nonviolent resistance' have been much more successful against authoritarian regimes than violent movements. They examined '323 campaigns' in the period from 1919 to 2006 — covering 'all known nonviolent and violent campaigns (each featuring at least 1,000 observed



How some artists see revolution



45 Revolutions Per Minute - and no violence

Disarming a police state

The effectiveness of nonviolence, in the view of the authors, has nothing to do with moral suasion:

'Civil resistance does not succeed because it melts the hearts of dictators and secret police. It succeeds because it is more likely than armed struggle to attract a large and more diverse base of participants and impose unsustainable costs on a regime'.

Chenoweth and Stephan list a number of reasons why nonviolent tactics can be so effective.

First of all, nonviolence is a tactic that allows a movement to mobilize a greater number of participants and supporters. In other words, there are fewer 'barriers to participation' than in an armed conflict, so a wider stratum of society is more likely to take part. And, needless to say, the larger the movement, the more difficult it is for a government to violently suppress it.

Another factor cited by the authors in favor of nonviolent movements is that they can employ a wider variety of tactics than is possible in an armed movement; not only demonstrations and strikes but other forms of noncooperation that make it clear that the legitimacy of the rulers has dissolved.

The authors point to the example of the Shah of Iran, who 'had little difficulty neutralizing the Islamist and Marxist-inspired [*sic*] guerilla groups' but when 'large numbers of oil workers, bazaar merchants, and students engaged in acts of collective nonviolent resistance . . . the regime's repressive apparatus became overstretched' and soon thereafter the Shah fled the country.

In other words, what was necessary

to defeat a police state is not 'greater violence', as Rall seems to think, but the mass power of workers to effectively disarm that apparatus of violence: overwhelming it with numbers, dissolving its legitimacy, and winning over fellow workers ordered to pull the trigger.

Even the most repressive regime relies upon a degree of cooperation and consent from the population. When that legitimacy among the citizenry has dissolved, the state's use of violence becomes increasingly difficult or even counterproductive. There are numerous examples in recent history alone of seemingly powerful regimes that have collapsed suddenly in the face of mass protest.

This essential point was made by Erica Chenoweth in the 21 August interview with the two authors on National Public Radio: 'When very large and diverse sectors of society withdraw their cooperation from the opponent government, it's extremely difficult for that government to maintain its hold on control. And the reason is because every power holder is 100 percent reliant on the cooperation, obedience and help of people that reside in its pillars of support - the security forces, the state media, religious authorities, educational elites, business and economic elites and civilian bureaucrats'.

Clearly,

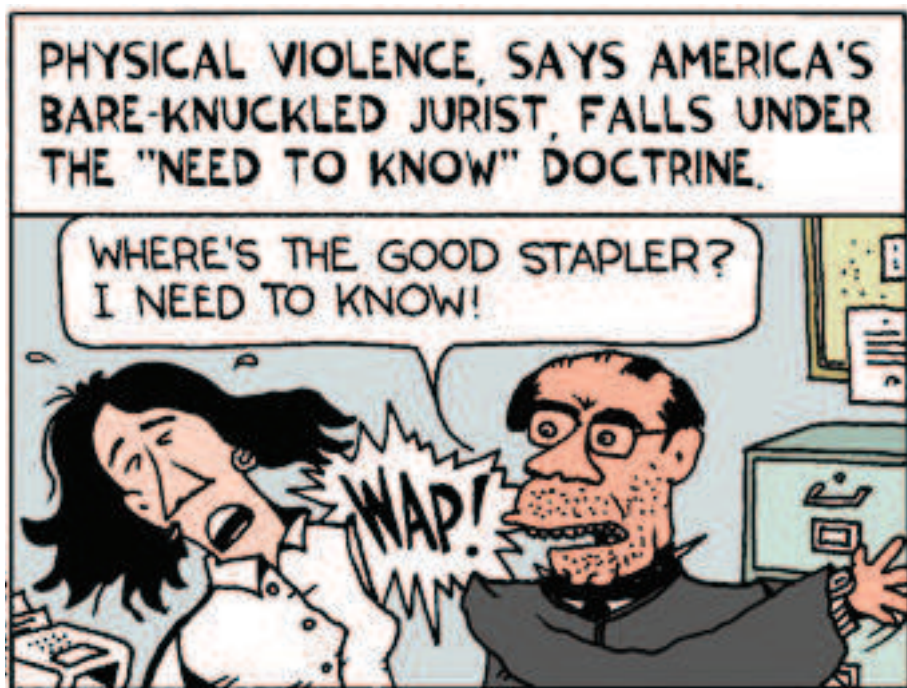
participants) for self-determination, the removal of an incumbent leader, or the expulsion of a foreign occupation'.

The authors found that the 'campaigns of nonviolent resistance against authoritarian regimes were twice as likely to succeed as violent movements'; and that 'almost half' of the nonviolent campaigns examined succeeded in achieving their goals, compared to just 20 percent of the violent ones.

These statistics, as you can see, are vague and the category 'campaign' includes every sort of social movement, whether its participants saw themselves as revolutionaries or reformists. But the interesting point to note is that authoritarian regimes often found it difficult to stamp out movements of mass nonviolent resistance despite the armed power of the state.

'Contrary to conventional wisdom, no social, economic, or political structures have systematically prevented nonviolent campaigns from emerging or succeeding', the authors argue, adding that, 'movements that opt for violence often unleash terrible destruction and bloodshed . . . usually without realizing the goals they set out to achieve'.

Ted Rall cartoon - against violence





Chenoweth is imagining a conflict *within* the ruling class, where the outcome depends on which side the bulk of the elites decide to back. But a similar dynamic would be at play in a socialist revolution as well. That is, when the majority of the working class withdraws its cooperation from the capitalist class, it would be extremely difficult for that class to maintain its hold on power and its pillars of support will begin to crumble.

The problem for the capitalist class in such a situation would hardly be a lack of military firepower; they would always outgun the workers. But unleashing that force against a rebellious working class could backfire, adding fuel to the fire; or the police and soldiers (workers themselves) might refuse to carry out the orders or turn their guns against the rulers.

Tactics are secondary

As advocates of nonviolence, Chenoweth and Stephan may be nothing more than useful idiots in the eyes of the military-industrial complex that actually runs

US foreign policy out of the Pentagon, but they do make some good points about how nonviolent tactics can work against authoritarian regimes as a sort of 'asymmetric' conflict.

But, to return to the question of revolution, the debate over violence versus nonviolence, however interesting, is not the primary issue for socialists. We are convinced that the success of a revolution depends on a majority of the working class coming to have an understanding of and desire for socialism. This is the key issue; much more important than the specific tactics socialists employ to surmount this or that obstacle along the way.

Ted Rall seems to suggest that the Occupy movement fell apart as a result of sticking religiously to ineffective nonviolent tactics. But the central problem of that movement had less to do with its nonviolent tactics (which were actually remarkably effective), than its lack of a clear vision of what could replace the unequal capitalist society against which they were protesting. It is hard to see how the use of violent tactics would have compensated for that lack of strategy.

Or, perhaps Rall was trying to say that the Occupy movement failed because it did not set itself the goal of sweeping aside the ruling class (which he says requires violence). But even if that is his argument, it only reveals that Rall is focused exclusively on the 'negative' or destructive side of revolution, rather than

the new society that replaces the old. In other words, like the Occupy movement he criticizes, Rall doesn't really have a basic goal or strategy for what is to replace capitalism. It is that absence of a goal that accounts for why movements like Occupy fall apart, not their preference for nonviolence.

Our own goal is clearly the creation of a new classless, borderless, moneyless society of common ownership; a society we call 'socialism'. And our strategy for achieving this goal is for more and more of our fellow workers to understand and consciously aim for this new form of society, until the point of critical mass is reached where replacing capitalism with socialism is a real, concrete task for the working class. At that point, the question becomes how best to take that final step. And we believe that, once socialism has majority backing, a nonviolent, democratic transformation is possible and preferable.

Violence is an effective means for a minority to hold on to power, or for another minority group to topple them and become the new rulers. But the workers make up the vast majority of society— if not 'the 99%', pretty close to it. When the majority of workers are moving steadfastly toward socialism, the violence of the minority ruling class would be unable to stem the tide, at least not for long.

MICHAEL SCHAUERTE

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Poverty Excludes

We look at different concepts of poverty, at the idea of social exclusion and at how governments have tried and failed to eradicate these.

Poverty need not imply destitution, the situation where a person simply cannot provide for themselves. Many asylum-seekers are forced to survive on £5 a day and so can genuinely be described as destitute, or as in absolute or extreme poverty. An alternative notion is that of relative poverty, living below a poverty line usually defined as a household receiving

less than 60 percent of the median household income. Thus in 2011-12, the median household income in the UK was £23,200 (down from £24,100 in 2007-8): 60 percent of this would be £14,460. Naturally, such figures need to be adjusted to take account of differences in terms of family size and the cost of living in different parts of the country. That same year, more than one child in four lived in

a household with income below the 60 percent poverty line after housing costs were taken into account. The extent of poverty is also revealed by increases in the numbers resorting to food banks and to petty shoplifting, even from pound stores, and by rises in cases of malnutrition treated in hospitals (over five thousand in 2012).

An alternative approach defines poverty in relation to typical living standards:

'Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies in which they belong' (Peter Townsend, quoted from www.cpag.org.uk/content/what-is-poverty).

This is often described as social exclusion: 'being unable to access the things in life that most people take for granted' (definition from Age Concern). At the very least this would mean: decent housing which was not overcrowded and which people could afford to heat; eating healthy and nutritious food, without worrying about skimping towards the end of the week and resorting to food banks; buying warm and functional clothes, without relying on hand-me-downs and charity shops; access to good-quality health care; having the chance to perform useful and rewarding work; being able to afford bus and train fares; enjoying some basic leisure activities, such as a trip to the cinema or a day in the country; having an annual holiday that is more than just staying with relatives. Not too much to ask, you might think, given the capabilities of modern society, but in fact beyond the reach of millions.

In his 2010 book *Injustice*, Daniel Dorling claimed that one-sixth of households in Britain count as poor, with debt as the main problem that prevents them from affording necessities, arguing that 'People spend and get into debt to maintain



A soup kitchen in Poland

their social position not out of envy of the rich, but out of the necessity to maintain self-respect.' You cannot keep up your self-respect if you truly are excluded from the normal standards of present-day living.

It is sometimes said, not just that the 60 percent figure is arbitrary, but that relative poverty, and the concept of social exclusion too, can give a very false impression, as under them people can still be regarded as poor even if their standard of living is well above that of poor people a generation or two before. And even those who are not destitute may have



Tony Blair, who in 1999 proclaimed a commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020

the use of gadgets and technology that did not even exist a couple of decades ago. If you have a big colour television, the argument goes, how can you be poor? One response is that you can still be socially excluded in the way sketched above; another would be that the comparison should be with the very richest people in society, who have prospered very nicely in spite of the recession; and finally, that the true comparison should be with the possibilities for life in a socialist world.

Reformist governments have of course addressed the problem of poverty. In 1999 Tony Blair proclaimed a commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020, but this has not been going well, with the interim target of halving child poverty by 2010-11 being missed. It was only cut by about a third, and even this reduction was partly due to a drop in the median income and hence the poverty line being lower. And as in other areas, government terminology did not quite mean what it appeared to. Just as 'full employment' does

"the five richest families in Britain own more wealth than the poorest fifth of the population"

not imply that everyone who wants a job has one, so 'eradicating' child poverty does not mean getting rid of it altogether. Rather, it was intended that fewer than 10 percent of children should live in families below the poverty line.

This specific target, along with others, was enshrined in Labour's Child Poverty Act of March 2010. The other big parties supported it, though

suggesting that the Coalition should act to increase wages.

The cause of poverty, however defined, is not that the benefits system encourages dependency and undermines any ambitions that people have. Nor is it that the tax system penalises those who earn relatively little when they start earning a bit more. The fundamental



the Tories complained that it tackled the symptoms of poverty rather than the causes. Shortly after the 2010 election, when poverty statistics for 2008-9 were published, Iain Duncan Smith stated:

'Millions of children, adults and pensioners are daily experiencing the crushing disadvantage that poverty brings. They are living at the margins of society, unable to achieve their aspirations and trapped in dependency. ... Vast sums of money have been poured into the benefits system over the last decade in an attempt to address poverty, but today's statistics clearly show that this approach has failed.'

The point about dealing with symptoms rather than causes was correct, but that after all is essentially what every government does. The Tory idea of the causes of poverty is also rather different from that of socialists: Duncan Smith later argued that the Labour government 'did not do enough to make work pay', though he is of course not

cause is the way that society is organised, with a small minority owning the means of production and the overwhelming majority forced to sell their labour power for a wage in order to survive. The degree of inequality this gives rise to is scarcely credible: the five richest families in Britain own more wealth than the poorest fifth of the population.

To be more accurate, workers are forced to attempt to sell their labour power, since there will not always be a capitalist in a position to exploit a worker and therefore willing to employ them. Workers may sometimes be able to maintain a reasonable standard of living, while at other times they may be excluded from what is by any criterion a basically acceptable way of life. But we are always excluded from true empowerment over our lives and those of our families – and that is not something that can be achieved under the present social system.

PAUL BENNETT

What *labour* is really worth

"The real price of every thing, what every thing really costs to the man who wants to acquire it, is the toil and trouble of acquiring it. What every thing is really worth to the man who has acquired it, and who wants to dispose of it or exchange it for something else, is the toil and trouble which it can save to himself, and which it can impose upon other people."

"Labour alone, therefore, never varying in its own value, is alone the ultimate and real standard by which the value of all commodities can at all times and places be estimated and compared. It is their real price; money is their nominal price only."

These are the words of Adam Smith about the system we inhabit currently but what would they mean if anything in the alternative system we may choose for the future?

Take money for instance, what does it mean to most people? Simply a means of acquiring the things they need and want, in fact most things throughout life and for the majority that isn't easily attained. And in many cases there is never enough, however hard they try. How much one needs for an average life for an average lifetime who knows? On an average wage, wherever you live on the planet, who can imagine what it means to be a millionaire or a billionaire (the numbers of which are rising fast)?

Counting at the rate of one dollar, pound or euro per second it will take twelve days to count a million and thirty one years to count a billion. Longer if you stop for the necessities of life. And as for a trillion, a number bandied about more frequently of late, with the expectation that within a few short years the first trillionaire will hit the headlines, simple maths shows us that 31,000 years would be required. That's an awful lot of toil and trouble, potentially an awful lot of labour.

It is the predatory nature of capitalism that has, in recent years, awakened increasing numbers to question what it is that is happening around the world and to feel aggrieved enough to protest in their thousands. From believing they lived in functioning democracies we are now aware that that belief has been overturned as demonstration after demonstration reveals the deeper awareness of masses of people. It is now commonly recognised that governments are running countries for the benefit of business and that business is extremely friendly to compliant governments. Revolving doors, hefty donations, lecture tours for ex-politicians, seats on boards, fees for access, you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. We know how the system works and for whom it works best, so the question for the great majority for whom it doesn't work becomes 'what are we going to do about it?'

Who can have failed to notice how the sphere of things

that used to be freely available has shrunk, has been taken away by force for the benefit of capitalists and corporations? Here cost comes into play. The cost to the public in general of the loss of the commons is impossible to put a price tag on. Water, land and hitherto public spaces have been acquired from the public sphere as money-making ventures: factories, mines, building projects, dams, monocrops for feed or biofuel; town centres, former public land and playing fields, even the ground underneath housing is vulnerable to takeover. The air we breathe is highly susceptible to pollution as an externality of the market system we endure. The polluters are also the beneficiaries of the profits from their businesses but they readily pass on the costs of that pollution to workers as externalities. The costs are borne by people living locally as air, water, ground and food is contaminated – and by those living far away as poisoned waste is shipped thousands of miles to be dealt with at a fraction of the cost it would be in the producing country. Huge health costs to be borne by those in the recipient neighbourhoods.



Accumulatively there are costs from loss of space, loss of freedom to use such spaces, health costs, loss of individual privacy and freedom of speech, loss of choice in all manner of areas signifying both personal and collective costs – all whilst the capitalist minority continues to steal more and more of the common wealth and influence law making. Current politics is far from inclusive and certainly not democratic in many

eyes.

Those with money are the ones with influence. They are free to buy whatever it is they want – material goods and the time and labour of others. However, in the grand scheme of things, they are the minority. Those with little – and we are many – *are* the labour.

Giving value to labour, in the broadest sense – those of us who work for our living, whether manual in farming, fishing, factory or mine, on road, rail or the high seas, or indoors in health, education, administration or any other kind of service industry – when we recognise the value of giving value to labour, to *our* labour and the labour of all the others like us, we will be on the path to answering the earlier question – 'what are we going to do about it?'

Removing the money element from our labour will remove the money from all of our transactions. It will also remove the profit seekers and corporations from any further equations. No more banks, investment companies, mortgage, rent and insurances creating endless headaches and the anxiety of indebtedness. No more middlemen and consumer ideology warping our minds and persuading us against our better judgment to consume, consume, consume. Labour, working together across the world, retaking and rebuilding the commons in the best interests of the common good. Labour, recognising its individual and collective value, working together to secure a democratic world community.

JS

The rise and decline of capitalism

Capitalism was *progressive* during its *ascendancy* in its *formative stage*. During this phase all its necessary formations and reformations were progressive, even though it emerged having been drenched in blood and gore. Both the capitalist and working classes were sprouting, growing – evolving. All the productive forces – means of production, instruments of labour and labour power, were developing within the womb of the new born relations of production. Hence here the working class movements for formation/reformation were progressive simply because elimination of capitalist relations, which were just taking shapes, was out of the question, even though consciousness about its negation ie. socialism, began to appear as working class ideas and interests alongside the ruling ideas and interests of the capitalist class. Both classes were involved in severing feudal relations of production and installing capitalist ones. This was the epoch of *bourgeois democratic revolution*.

For world socialist revolution to occur two interrelated conditions must mature – the *subjective* condition ie. the revolutionary will and organization of the working class on a world scale and the *objective* condition ie. a comprehensive material maturity of the productive forces for abundance. Until the end of the 19th century the revolutionary replacement of capitalism was impossible since these necessary conditions were not yet ripe.

However, by the beginning of the 20th century, the situation reversed. Capitalism entered into its era of *decadence*. Decadence – because, from then onwards, the revolutionary situation (objective condition) remains ready but the revolution has not happened owing to immaturity of working class consciousness and organization (subjective condition).

Thus, humankind has reached the ‘era of social revolution’ but the revolution is yet to begin. Capitalism has gone into its phase of global crisis cycles and anarchy leading to world wars involving capital against capital, fomenting national prejudices and pitting workers against workers to slaughter one another, destroying productive forces on all contending sides and producing misery, poverty, waste, pollution and environment

destruction.

This is, however, not to say that capital has come to a dead halt.

Capital’s nature of exploitation, appropriation and accumulation of surplus value continues as long as it exists.

Capital develops unevenly through *concentration* and *centralization*. And for that matter capital is still going on accumulating globally whereby one capital kills many giving rise to gigantic conglomerates.



Marx: ‘The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it’

Accumulation is going through destruction and annihilation. This is reactionary. This is decadence.

Productive forces have developed to the stage of both actual and potential abundance for all. But the working class consciousness and organization have remained subdued under the domination of capitalist ideas and interests – constantly and crushingly campaigned by all pervading ‘right’, ‘left’, ‘centre’ chronicles and ideologies. They comprise all various belligerent factions of capital. Although they use different names and slogans on their banners, they don’t have any scientific alternative to capital’s devastatingly continued reproduction. They are mere reformists of all various hues. We have experienced enough of such things. And enough is enough! They have given capitalism a century long *anachronistic existence*. Measures which were once very necessary and useful for maturation of the system have already more or less accomplished their tasks and grown old and outdated. The material productive forces of society have come into conflict with the existing relations of production. From forms

of development of the productive forces these relations have turned into their *fetters* or, in other words, the productive forces have outgrown the production relations.

The history of the past hundred years has shown us that the reformist movements around the world have not only been *futile*, but also have increasingly grown *reactionary* by providing capitalism with a new lease of life by the entire capitalist media which has baffled the people as a whole. Moreover the leftists and the Leninists have further confused the workers and actually defended capitalism. Now we need a change – a radical change at the foundation of society – and more – a change of the base-structure-superstructure of society – lock, stock, and barrel.

The precise task of socialists today is to hasten the revolution by raising class consciousness through education and organization of the working class world-wide. The working class is not required to establish any eternal truth, or to realize any far-fetched ideal, but to set free the elements of the new society with which the old decadent capitalist society itself is pregnant. ‘... the proletariat can and must emancipate itself. But it cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today, which are summed up in its own situation.’ (Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, 1845, CW, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1975, p. 37). And from the *Communist Manifesto*: ‘The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation.’

And remember Marx’s famous pronouncement: ‘The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it’ (*Theses on Feuerbach*, 1845).

BINAY SARKAR

Ripping off the patient

The president of the Zambia Medical Association Dr Munjajati recently revealed that the current health delivery system in the country cannot protect patients seeking private medical attention from flagrant overcharging. His remarks tend to highlight the fact that Zambia has a two-tier health system within public hospitals. Fee-paying hospital wards were introduced in 1980 by the UNIP government of Dr Kaunda. Those with enough money could be hospitalized in fee-paying wards in order to receive proper medical treatment.

The reluctance of the current Patriotic Front government to boldly check and regulate the operations of privately-owned hospitals and clinics is because to do so would be against the government's policy of economic liberalization. Private health care is encouraged in the belief that an increased role for entrepreneurs and competition in the delivery of healthcare will result in a more efficient and effective healthcare system. Thus the search for financial gain determines the quality of

President Michael Sata



healthcare systems. But the values of free enterprises and the economic benefits that may flow from a more efficient healthcare system can only be achieved at the cost of other and more important values – including a concern for fairness, the dignity of people and community-centred ethics that places people before profits.

Caring or looking after the sick is a calling of special dignity and importance. The striking nurses were dismissed by the Labour Minister in 2013 on the allegation that they had failed to uphold the oath of allegiance they swore when they graduated from Health College – to serve others out of compassion. To go on strike for reasons of salary increments was anathema to the values that guide governments and their civil servants. This is the oath to serve the people out of love and compassion, without regard to the standard of prevailing salaries and poor conditions of service. In that case, by the same standard, it would be the task of every government to make access to healthcare as free as possible. But they don't.

There are relatively small amounts of legislation regulating the operations of health facilities compared to laws governing health personnel. The existing legislation regulating the operations of both private and public health hospitals was introduced by President Michael

Sata when he was minister of health. In 2002 the MMD government went on to introduce consultation and medical fees in both public hospitals and clinics. Economic liberalisation entailed the acceptance of the lurid fact that free health care and education was a cost to the government. Hospitals, schools and colleges were de-centralised under health and education boards.

Under the system of private healthcare, the opportunities for ripping off patients seems endless. There is nothing in place to regulate the prices that are charged by service providers and hence the price differences in goods and services from one private health provider to another. Grading of private health facilities does not exist on the ground due to the salient professional ethic surrounding medicine. Due to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and the mystery surrounding the disease and its causes, Zambia has seen a proliferation of traditional herbal therapies and traditional healers. It is not illegal in Zambia today to sell and advertise traditional herbal medicines that have not even undergone a laboratory scrutiny

The introduction of free male circumcision in public hospitals emphasises that lack of a regulatory framework. The public health system exists in a state of corruption. Private surgeries are stocked with medicines siphoned from public hospitals. There is no treatment protocol and this results in overservicing. A private doctor will prescribe ten supplementary drugs for the sake of advertising his business. Most private hospitals are under the control of lay managers whose primary interest is to make a profit. Thus under the system of private health care doctors promote profit-producing drugs, surgeries and tests. Medical treatments and counselling that lack profit potential are discouraged. The commercialization of private healthcare has led to the abandonment of human virtues that are essential for a community – caring for old people, compassion and charity, especially for the less privileged members of the community.

The zeal and altruism that is displayed by doctors and nurses in their primary concern for the alleviation of pain and sickness has been hijacked by the profit motive. Indeed the prevailing ideology says that political states or governments have a duty to protect the interests of the citizenry, through providing them with law, security and healthcare. But the provision of healthcare under capitalism is hamstrung by the principle of free enterprise with its competition and profit. The income and wealth disparities between the working and capitalist classes translate themselves into standardized economic, political and social programmes. The vision of free healthcare, and other services cannot obtain under a capitalist state. It is only in socialist society that health care will be characterized by its capacity to serve the good of every member of society. The sense of responsibility by those engaging in providing free medical care will demonstrate the individual and social virtues necessary for the wellbeing of a classless, moneyless and stateless society – socialism.

K. MULENGA

An ancient papyrus scroll, recently found lying unnoticed on our General Secretary's desk for nearly 2,000 years, has been examined and identified as a previously unknown 'Gospel of Karl'.

And it came to pass that there was great discontent in the land. For they who were the capitalist class and owneth the factories, the farms and the means of production, and their fathers before them, and their father's fathers before them, were a host of robbing parasites.

And lo, the people cried out to the Lord that they had no rest from their labours, that they were fed upon offal burgers and fries, draped in shoddy garments from the land of Primark, and up to their ruddy necks in debt. And he heard them not.

And they sayeth one unto the other 'Verily, what hath come to pass? Why are we, who floggeth our guts out to produce all the wealth up the bloody creek without a paddle, while they who owneth the wealth do sod all and liveth the life of Riley? It is surely a sign from the Lord that we toil not hard enough'.

And Moses heard their cries and came down the mountain saying unto them 'Verily, I have tabloids of stone from the High Priest Murdoch, and upon them is scribed the commandments which thou shalt keep for all thy days, and if thou question them thou shalt surely be cast out of the paradise in which thy live'. And they were sorely afraid and knew not what to do.

Then cometh amongst them a wise man whose name was called Karl, and he sayeth unto them 'Workers of the world unite, ye have nothing to lose but thy chains'. And they trembled with fear.

'Who art thou who cometh to cause discontent amongst us?' they asked, 'Some kind of bloody commie?'

And again he spake unto them saying, 'Fear not, for I bring ye glad tidings of great joy. If ye just bloody listen for five minutes I will explain. He that employeth thee and payeth thee thy wages is surely ripping thee off. Ye needeth him like ye needeth a bloody hole in the head'.

And lo, they were confused and sore afraid and trembled in their socks. 'How shalt we live if they giveth us not our wages?' they sayeth.

'Jesus Christ!' he exclaimed, 'thou art bloody slow on the uptake'. 'Verily, I say unto thee, ye toil unto them simply because ye owneth not. Thy wages are just enough to keepeth thee alive and maketh sure ye come back to bloody work next week'.

'But' they cryeth, 'It is surely the way of the Lord. And anyway, it was written long ago that the meek shall inherit the earth'.

'In thy bloody dreams cock' sayeth he whose name was called Karl. 'Thou shalt inherit bugger all until thou stoppeth being so bloody meek'.

'Take no notice of him' sayeth the High Priest. 'Verily it shall come to pass, but not until thy next life, for thou art sinful and must first be punished. Yet for a fee we can prayeth for thee unto the invisible God and guarantee thee a place in paradise, but it will cost thee many pieces of silver'.

'But how canst we knoweth that the invisible god doth exist' they asketh.

'We have proof' sayeth the priest. 'Doth not the fact that nobody hath ever seen him not prooveth that he is invisible?'

'Bloody hell' sayeth the people, 'we never thought of that. Thou art either a genius or a total bloody dickhead, but we knoweth not which'.

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Green economic policies

THE GREEN Party held its annual conference at the beginning of September. According to the BBC, 'the Green Party have sought to position themselves to the left of Labour and the Lib Dems by adopting policies such as the renationalisation of the railways, and curbing private NHS work' (BBC online, 5 September).

Being more radical than Labour and the Liberals is easy enough and it is true that in her speech as their leader Natalie Bennett did seem as if she might have been speaking at a Labour Party Conference in the days of yore.

The Green Party, she told the BBC, is 'the party of real change, the party with plans and policies for how to transform our economy so that it works for the common good ... What we really have to do is rebalance our economy. At the moment, wealthy individuals and particularly big multinational companies aren't paying their taxes and aren't paying adequate wages. Britain is a low-wage economy. We have to allow people to get a decent return on their labour.'

This is to assume that the economy - which is capitalist - is something that a government can manipulate or mould at will, but the evidence of all past governments that have tried to do this is the opposite. It can't be done. Rather than governments being able to change the way capitalism works it's been the other way round. Governments have to dance to capitalism's tune and that means putting profits first.

The Green Party may not like capitalism in its present form and want to 'rebalance' it, but they still see no alternative to capitalism as a system of production for profit based on wage-labour and are resigned to working within it. It is true that the sort of capitalism they envisage would not be dominated by tax-dodging multinationals but one in which the profit-seeking enterprises would be small and eco-friendly. But there is no more chance of an eco-friendly capitalism than there is of going back to small-scale capitalism.

Transforming the capitalist economy so that 'it works for the common good' is precisely what cannot be done. Capitalism is a class-divided society driven by the imperative for those who own and control the means of wealth production to make a profit. It can only function as a profit system in the interest of those who live off profits.

All governments have to take this constraint into account and frame their policies so as to give priority to profits and profit-making. This means that they have to back off from taxing the rich too much - to pay, for instance, for ecological measures or higher wages and benefits - in case they reduce the incentive to pursue profits and so provoke an economic crisis.

Derek Wall, once a Green Party spokesperson (in the days before they had a Leader) once put this rather well:

'A Green government will be controlled by the economy rather than being in control. On coming to office through coalition or more absolute electoral success, it would be met by an instant collapse of sterling as 'hot money' and entrepreneurial capital went elsewhere. The exchange rate would fall and industrialists would move their factories to countries with more relaxed environmental controls and workplace regulation. Sources of finance would dry up as unemployment rocketed, slashing the revenue from taxation and pushing up the social security bills. The money for ecological reconstruction - the building of railways, the closing of motorways and construction of a proper sewage system - would run out' (*Getting There*, 1990, p. 78).

The answer is not to steal Labour's abandoned clothes but to get rid of capitalism and its production for profits and work-

Daniel Kelly as Marx



Marx in Soho

MARX IN Soho, the 1995 one-man play by Howard Zinn was recently produced at the Marx Library in London directed by Sergio Amigo and starring Daniel Kelly as Marx. Zinn portrays 'Marx as few people knew him, as a family man, struggling to support his wife and children' in a 'fantasy' where Marx returns but due to a bureaucratic error not to Soho, London where he lived, but to Soho in New York City. Marx has returned 'to clear my name!'

Zinn drew on insights into Marx's private life in Yvonne Kapp's biography of Eleanor Marx. Marx speaks of life in Soho: 'we were living in London. Jenny and I and the little ones. Plus two dogs, three cats, and two birds. Barely living. A flat on Dean Street, near where they dumped the city's sewage.' Marx speaks about his favourite daughter Eleanor, 'a precociously brilliant child' nicknamed 'Tussy' who is 'a revolutionary at the age of eight', plays chess with 'the Moor' (the family nickname for Marx 'because of my dark complexion'), drinks, smokes, and is enamoured

of the Irish struggle which she learned from Lizzie Burns.

Marx is very witty: 'Marx is dead! Well I am ... and I am not. That's dialectics for you', 'Understand one thing – I'm not a Marxist. I said that once to Pieper and he almost croaked' and 'My Ricardo! You pawned my Ricardo!' Zinn invents a visit to his home by the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, no record of such a visit exists although they had met in Paris in 1844. Bakunin was an irrepressible revolutionary who arrived in London in 1861 at Alexander Herzen's home, bursting into the drawing-room where the family was having supper. 'What! Are you sitting down eating oysters! Well! Tell me the news. What is happening, and where?!'

Zinn portrays 'Marx angry that his theories had been so distorted as to stand for Stalinist cruelties and to rescue Marx from those who now gloated over the triumph of capitalism.' Zinn concludes the play with Marx proclaiming we should be 'using the incredible wealth of the earth for human beings. Give people what they need: food, medicine, clean air, pure water, trees and grass, pleasant homes to live in, some hours of work, more hours of leisure. Don't ask who deserves it. Every human being deserves it.'

Marx in Soho is highly recommended for socialist theatre-goers: 'Look at it this way. It is the second coming. Christ couldn't make it, so Marx came...'



Richard Hamilton at the Tate Modern

There was a major retrospective of the work of Richard Hamilton at the Tate Modern in 2014. He is acknowledged as the inventor of 'Pop Art' which he described as 'popular, transient, expendable, low-cost, mass-produced, young, witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous, and Big Business.'

The exhibition reconstructs his installation *Fun House*, originally shown as part of the Whitechapel Gallery's 1956 show *This Is Tomorrow*. It incorporates film, music, distorted architecture, op art and Hollywood film imagery and pin-ups such as Marlon Brando, Charlton Heston, Marilyn Monroe, and Robbie the Robot from *Forbidden Planet*. It is an homage to 'Americana', as well as a celebration of the new youth and 'pop' culture of 1950s capitalism.

In his 1956 collage *Just What is it that Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* Hamilton has a muscle-man provocatively holding a lolly with the word POP and a woman with bare breasts wearing a lampshade hat, surrounded by emblems of the affluence of 1950s capitalism from a vacuum cleaner to a large canned ham. Capitalism is portrayed as 'cool', it was riding high in its 'golden age' of the post-war economic boom, the reformists believed capitalism could work in the interests of the working class, and Macmillan proclaimed



'people have never had it so good.' Hamilton particularly admired the German electrical company Braun and its Chief Design Officer Dieter Rams whose 'consumer products came to occupy a place in my heart and consciousness that Mont Sainte-Victoire did in Cézannes', and in 1964 he began to base works on Braun's marketing images.

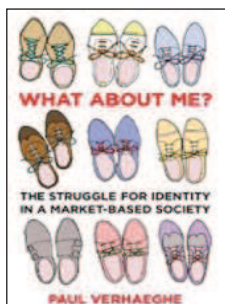
After the failure of Keynesian capitalism in the 1970s, Hamilton was horrified by the 1980s capitalist restructuring under Thatcher, and the reintroduction of unfettered free market capitalism. His 1984 installation *Treatment Room* is inspired by the bleak, clinical style of the capitalist state reflected in the DHSS office or NHS hospital waiting room. A TV monitor where the X-ray machine would be repeats footage of Thatcher from the 1983 Tory Party Conference. His *War Games* (1991-92) used TV news footage of the 1991 Gulf War which portrayed the war as a sport for viewers and reminds us of the BBC *Newsnight* coverage with Peter Snow's sandpit and models. Later Hamilton portrays 'war criminal' Tony Blair as a gun-toting cowboy against a backdrop of military inferno in *Shock and Awe* (2010).

The Hamilton retrospective has some salutary lessons: you cannot 'reform' capitalism to work in the interests of the working class, and war is endemic to capitalism due to competition between capitalist groups for raw materials such as oil in the Middle East.

STEVE CLAYTON

What about Marx?

What About Me? The Struggle for Identity in a Market-Based Society
Paul Verhaeghe. Scribe.



This book, written by a Belgian academic and translated from the Dutch, is fundamentally an attack on 'neo-liberalism'. He sees it as psychologically extremely

destructive and socialists would concur with his withering critique. The great problem is that without any political understanding (which Marx would have provided) he sees this ideology as something new rather than merely the latest propaganda that seeks to justify the continuation of capitalism. One is tempted to think that his scorn is generated (as he indicates) by the penetration of the ideology into his own realm of teaching and psychotherapy; industrial workers might say, with some justification: 'welcome to our world'.

With its attempt to measure everything and so turn quality into quantity capitalism famously knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. Another flaw in Verhaeghe's analysis is the contention that human identity is wholly dependent on the relationship with parents who represent moral and ethical values. Socialists would contend that man's relationship with nature through his desire to constructively change it (his or her work) is fundamental to all human identity and its absence in capitalism is the real genesis of alienation. Verhaeghe has not understood that working to make profits for the parasite class is fundamental to capitalism and as such can never offer mankind the kind of meaningful fulfilling work that he advocates. And so he joins the countless other critics who want to reform the system without really understanding it. His dismisses socialism which conflates with the leftist regimes of the past.

Verhaeghe's knowledge of Freud is extensive (as one would expect) but it does serve as a warning that a purely psychological approach to mankind's travails can be very misguided. The work of Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse is infinitely superior to this short book because, although dealing with the same subject, the political knowledge expressed is on a par with

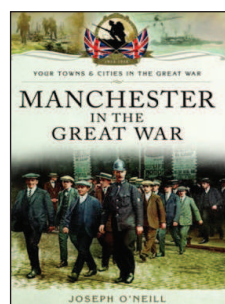
their psychological understanding. With the exception of one passing reference to Theodore Adorno the author would seem oblivious to the work of the 'Frankfurt School'. This is very odd since they were focused on the very same subject of the book.

Unfortunately the author of this book has no political weaponry with which to destroy the system that he so clearly despises.

WEZ

Goodbye, Piccadilly

Manchester in the Great War.
Joseph O'Neill. Pen and Sword
£9.99.



This is a better book than first seemed, given the unpleasant remarks made in the Introduction. O'Neill claims that the generation of 1914 were motivated by

'municipal pride and love of country', values that people have since been taught to hate. The educational establishment have supposedly emphasised multiculturalism, and so white working-class children have been cut off from their roots. Fortunately such bigoted attitudes do not surface in the rest of the book.

There was a rush to join up among many workers when war was declared in August 1914. This was sometimes on political grounds ('poor little Belgium'), but also for economic and other reasons (not much patriotism, then). Life expectancy in Manchester was below the national average, with men generally not making it into their fifties. For many, enlisting offered an escape from unemployment or tedious badly-paid work. In the case of one 16-year-old living in a one-room house on Oldham Road, the war was 'a grand opportunity to join the army and see the world' (one wonders if he saw much more than the inside of a trench).

There was much social pressure on those who did not volunteer, but by late 1915 the enthusiasm to join up was waning. The announcement that conscription was likely to be introduced led to many single men applying for jobs in munitions factories, on the grounds that such work would be likely to exempt them from the call-up. By the end of 1916 more than half the local population

were involved in turning out war materials.

But there was also a great deal of industrial unrest, with strikes aimed at countering the effects of rent increases and massive price rises, especially for food and clothes. In 1915 thirty-two men from a factory in Reddish were fined for striking without going to the Board of Trade for arbitration first. The blackout imposed from March that year was enormously unpopular, since there was a view that it turned canals and rivers into death traps. There was a general fall in crime, with the exception, strangely enough, of bigamy. By early 1918, the food shortages were so bad that there were rumours that Britain might be forced to end the war in order to avoid starvation.

Even the capitalist press could not entirely whitewash the grim nature of the fighting. The first list of local men wounded appeared on 5 September 1914. During the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, the headlines in the *Manchester Evening News* went in a week from 'Kitchener's Boys: New Armies Make Good' to 'Heavy Toll of the City Units'.

Anti-war protest was difficult, since meetings and demos were often either banned by the police or broken up by the so-called British Workers' League. Plenty of people appealed against being conscripted, on various grounds. O'Neill writes that appellants were generally excused combat service if they were 'resolute and reasonably articulate', though he gives no evidence or statistics to support this (one major weakness of the book is that it has no notes, references or bibliography, making it impossible to know the source of any of the statements made).

O'Neill says that by the end of 1915 Manchester was 'totally given over to war', and that more than any other city it was 'transformed by the war'. The 22,000 men from Manchester and Salford killed in fighting for the interests of their rulers certainly had their lives more than transformed.

PB



Capitalism can never be made to work for us

EVERY ELECTION is the same. Your vote is needed to clear up the present issue of the day and the party asking for it is the only party who can sort it out.

But for all the promises nothing ever gets better. Nothing ever gets resolved. The solution isn't around the corner. This has gone on for ages. The political parties are like someone trying to clean a window with a dirty cloth and rather than swap it for a new one they harangue each other about how they use it.

The Conservatives see nothing wrong with the dirty cloth, all that we need for a brighter British window is to apply it more firmly, roll up our sleeves and try a little harder. UKIP see nothing wrong with the dirty cloth either, but feel its use should be guided by a purely British hand. Labour is appalled! Labour feels that by wringing out the cloth and changing how it's applied will lead to a fairer, more prosperous window. The Left feels this doesn't go far enough, only by cleansing the cloth and a complete reorganisation of how the window is scrubbed will do. Of course, the BNP couldn't care less about the state of the cloth, only what colour it allows the window to become.

No matter who takes charge the

vision of the future remains dull, there is only so much that can be done with a dirty cloth.

The Socialist Party challenges all other parties because it knows that capitalism can only be run in the interest of the few. For us the question isn't whether it's in the nation's interest to stay in, or out, of the EU. It's whether the nation's interests and the people's interests are the same. The answer is no.

The Socialist Party is part of the World Socialist Movement. For 110 years we have organised without leaders practising real democracy. Our goal is not to run capitalism for you in the interest of individual nations. Our goal is to unite the people of the world so that we, the people, can run it in the interest of ourselves.

We will not stand for starvation in a world that can feed everyone more than adequately. We will not see those who work and create the wealth struggle while those who manipulate thrive. We will not see the environment destroyed in the name of profits. We will not see honest, hard working people turned against each other in war to serve a minority's interests.

SEAN DEEGAN

From page 18

And the priest replied unto them saying 'Praise be to the Lord'.

And the people wept saying 'Yea, we are of a sinful nature and must not interfere with what the Lord hath ordained'. And they turneth one unto another saying 'Verily, if the Lord hath not intended us to be poor he would hath provided us with slaves'.

'Yea', sayeth their companions, 'Just like he did for the capitalist class'.

Then again spake he whose name was called Karl. 'Christ alive! this is going to taketh longer than I thought: From whence does thou think thy employer getteth the loot from which he payeth thy wages?'

'It is a mystery' they replied unto him'.

'A mystery, my arse', He replied. 'He owneth everything that thou hath laboured to produce and he selleth it: And from whence doth he getteth the loot from which he payeth his bills and maketh all his profits?'

And they looketh one to another in awe. 'Bloody hell,' they sayeth. 'We who toil all of our days do provide the bloody lot'.

'I thinketh that at last the penny hath dropped' sayeth he whose name was called Karl, and he went on his way rejoicing.

NICK WHITE



Electronic Heroin

ANYONE SWITCHING on half way through *Web Junkie* (BBC4) might think they've tuned in to a grim dystopian drama, rather than a documentary. Uniformed teenagers march through a Chinese boot camp with drab walls and blandly

functional furniture. Some have been tricked into joining, or have woken up there after being drugged. All have been sent because they have been diagnosed with 'internet addiction', which the state claims is 'the number one public health threat to its teenage population'. More than 400 such boot camps have been built across China since 'internet addiction' was classified as a clinical disorder. *Web Junkie*:

China's Addicted Teens follows several teenagers and their parents through the treatment provided by the Daxing 'Chinese Teenagers Mental Growth Centre' in Beijing.

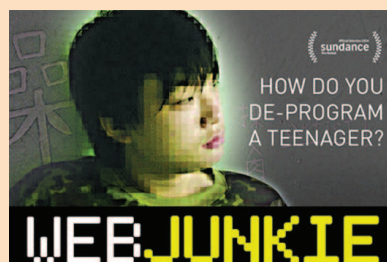
This treatment to encourage 'mental growth' is a bizarre combination of lectures, drill exercises, medication, 'self-reflection' in an isolation room, patriotic songs and group therapy. The latter are awkward

conversations between the children, their parents and nurses, mostly about their distant relationships. In one of his lectures to a class of parents, the centre's professor connects family problems with being too pushy for academic achievements. This is the only time in the film that raises wider explanations for 'internet addiction' (or 'electronic heroin', as it's called). The faults in society which make some teenagers prefer a virtual life aren't discussed. Nor is the possibility that 'internet addiction' is a social construct, although if the centre's authorities realised this, they would be doing themselves out of a job. The existence of these centres reinforces the definition of an 'internet addict' and therefore fuels the issue.

The regime at the Daxing centre looks more like that of a prison than a hospital. Despite claims of a 70 percent success rate, its inmates are mostly disparaging of its programme and the notion that they have an illness. Even if

prolonged internet use has affected their relationships or motivation, getting them to sing and do press ups probably isn't the best way to address the problem. And even if they are 'cured' and can rejoin society as a productive unit, they're likely to end up in a dull office job, still sat in front of a computer for eight hours a day.

MIKE FOSTER



Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site:
<http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

Manchester Branch

Saturday 11 October 2.00pm.
'World War One: No Working Class Interests at Stake'
Unicorn, Church Street, Manchester M4 1PW.

Glasgow Branch

Wednesday 15 October 8.30pm.
'Karl Marx in the 21st Century'
Maryhill Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 7YE.

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 19 October 3.00pm.
'Have You Read Piketty?'
Speaker: Adam Buick.
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.

West London Branch

Tuesday 21 October 8.00pm.
'War without End: The Ukraine, Gaza and ISIS'
Speaker: Steve Clayton.
Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, London W4 4JN.

Oxford Communist Corresponding Society

Thursday 23 October 7.30pm.
'I for one welcome our robot overlords'
Socialist Party speaker: Bill Martin.
The Mitre pub, 17 High Street (corner of Turl Street), Oxford OX1 4AG.

Socialist Party Head Office

10.30 am to 5.00pm Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 October
Autumn Delegate Meeting
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.

East Anglia Regional Branch

Saturday 8 November 2.00pm.
'Music, Recuperation and Capitalism'
Speaker: Stair
The Nelson Hotel, 120 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich NR1 1DX. (The meeting room can be accessed by going through the Costa Coffee Café and down the stairs. Left hand side of the bar as you face it).

Yorkshire Regional Branch

Saturday 15 November 2.00pm.
Debate with the Alliance For Workers' Liberty

Socialist Party Speaker: Bill Martin.
The Red Shed, Wakefield Labour Club, 18 Vicarage Street, Wakefield WF1 1QX.

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 16 November 3.00pm.
'Bilderberg Ate My Hamster: Conspiracy Theories in Capitalism'
Speaker: Rob Worden.
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 23 November 3.00pm.
'The Case Against Fracking'
Speaker: Darrell Whitehead.
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.

Other events

Party leafletting of TUC 'Britain needs a pay rise' march 'Saturday 18 October - assemble 11.00am at Blackfriars Embankment for march to Hyde Park.

Party literature stall outside the Anarchist Book Fair Saturday 18 October between 10.00am and 7.00pm. Queen Mary College, University of London, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS.

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Scrap capitalism

IT IS time to forever scrap forever this cock-eyed system that takes from the poor and gives to the rich; that preaches austerity for the 95 percent whilst the elite get yet richer; where millionaire leaders shed crocodile tears over poverty as they live in luxury. Somehow it has been sold to us that this is usual – moreover it is the only way to organise society, and it is good and healthy. You could not make it up.

We could share all the world. Scrap capitalism, abolish the monetary system and suddenly the playing field is not so uneven. We will not have achieved utopia but many of the idiocies of the current system will have gone: life will not be quite so problematic. No longer would the accountant who finds havens for the rich to hide their wealth to avoid tax earn a thousand times more than the carers looking after the health of your old aunt – because there would no longer be wages. No more wages slavery, just imagine. You'd be able to do what you do and be able to take what you need.

You will no doubt be told it's mad and totally unachievable. But think what would have been said about the internet or triple heart bypass surgery 50 years ago. Human beings are incredibly intelligent – just look at how much and how quickly we can achieve things when we set our minds to it – and we in the Socialist Party are simply saying the world can be organised in a more intelligent way. It cannot be seen as either intelligent or necessary that most of the wealth of the world is given to so few.

All the other parties offer you some variant of what we have already – possibly a few more checks and balances. Sadly history shows that, whatever the government, the rich come out on top. We are here to say it need not be like this.

HOWARD PILOTT

Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

50 Years Ago

Tweedledee or 'dum

In the 1964 General Election, as in those of the past, the capitalist political parties have encouraged us to believe that fundamental issues are at stake.

This is far from the truth. The Labour and Conservative Parties are argue over trifles—the fight between them is sham. On the vital issues of the day are one.

This is reflected in many ways. It is reflected in the basic agreement in the parties' policies. It is reflected in the fact that, although each side presents its leader as a paragon of honesty, knowledge and strength, none of them take the fundamentally different stand of opposing leadership in principle.

Home or Wilson? Landed aristocrat or Grammar schoolboy made good? Amiable elegance or rumpled, chubby purpose? The voters are asked to make their choice between these two representatives of capitalism, on the assumption that leaders are necessary, because without them we poor dunderheads would lose our way in the treacherous maze of the wicked world.

It is not difficult to penetrate this sham. The most casual investigation of leaders past and present reveals them as hard, cynical men dedicated to the ruthless administration of the capitalist system. It also shows up the game of leadership as a dirty business.

Sir Alec Douglas-Home has recently joined in the game for whatever advantage his party can get out of it. On the other side Harold Wilson has shown that a leader's most valuable asset is a cold, professional determination.

It is no coincidence, and not entirely due to the General Election, that since Wilson became leader the Labour Party has kept its splits plastered over. So smooth has his political handling been that his public relations men are trying now to dispel the image of him as too clever, as the cocksure, calculating political climber.

(from editorial, *Socialist Standard*, October 1964)

Labour, Lib-Dem, Tory



The Socialist Standard examines their case

ACTION REPLAY

Basket Case

YOU MIGHT well be able to guess that football is the most popular participant sport in Britain, but you would probably be surprised to learn that basketball ranks second. Every year over 2.5 million people over 14 play the game.

But in terms of medals and national prestige, things are not so good. The British men's basketball team has never qualified for an Olympics contest, though they did play as host nation at London 2012, where they won just one match out of five. They recently failed to make it through to the European national tournament in 2015, having lost in the qualifiers to Iceland and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Early this year funding at the elite level was cut from £7m to zero, as UK Sport reassessed its priorities after the London Olympics. This organisation (which receives money from the government and the National Lottery) deals only with 'top end' sport, and – in addition to money for athletics – dishes out sizeable sums to sports such as sailing and fencing, which deliver a fair number of medals but have very little impact in terms of participation. It should be pointed out, though, that bas-

ketball still gets funding from, for instance, Sport England, which is concerned with grass roots sport.

Former international John Amaechi argued (*BBC online*, 22 August) that basketball could help solve various social problems: 'There is legitimacy to all the sports in question, but are canoeing, shooting, archery, fencing, modern pentathlon and rowing the answer to our obesity problem? Are these the sports that can permeate our urban communities and inspire a generation of youth who are dramatically less well off than the previous?' He proposed radical changes to the way the sport is run, at all levels.

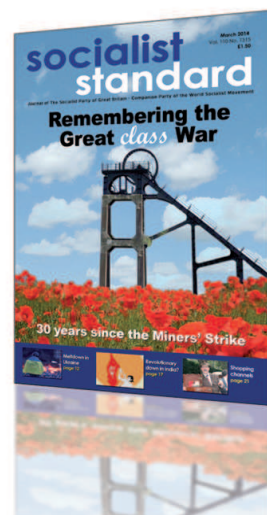
The boss of British Basketball, Roger Moreland, dismissed Amaechi's complaints, and insisted that progress was being made. Though in relation to the recent qualifiers he could only say, 'Frankly, sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. We just happened to have lost on this particular occasion.'

Amaechi is probably rather optimistic about what sport could do to keep people fit, well and off the streets. This little spat tells us quite a lot about the priorities that drive establishment support for sport: weighing up the furtherance of national glory against promoting a healthy population. But they all see sport as serving some useful (for them) function and not just being for fun.

PB

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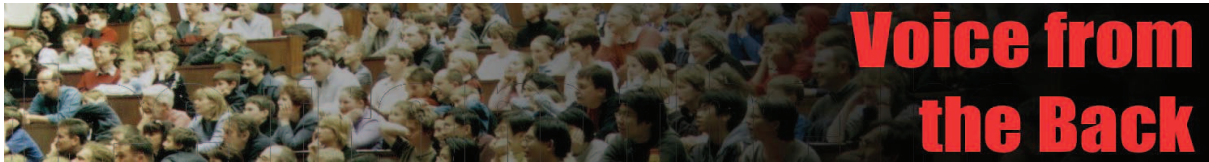
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Voice from the Back

Chinese Hypocrisy

Wealthy Chinese tourists are splashing out up to £100,000 on hunting trips to Scotland, so they can feel like Downton Abbey's Earl of Grantham. Inspired by the ITV series, hunting parties from China are hiring out castles with butlers and staff included so they can try their hand at bagging some of the biggest game roaming the countryside. 'Among those visiting is Jack Ma, one of China's richest men. He recently hired out Aldourie Castle near Loch Ness for £36,000. Mr Ma spent a week with 11 friends on the 500 acre estate, also hiring staff including a butler and cook' (*Daily Mail*, 11 August). Mr Ma is reckoned to have a fortune of over £6 billion. Oh, by the way the Chinese government claims they have communism in China!



Getting Away With It

Britain's top executives are now paid 143 times the wages of an average employee, according to a study. Executive salaries have increased dramatically in relation to most workers, said the High Pay Centre. 'The think tank has called on the Government to act after it found that in 1998 the average chief executive of a FTSE 100 was paid 47 times the pay of their average employee. The Centre's director Deborah Hargreaves said: 'Britain's executives have not got so

much better over the past two decades. The only reason why their pay has increased so rapidly compared to their employees is that they are able to get away with it' (*Daily Express*, 18 August). So much for the notion that there is some sort of morality behind the jungle warfare of the wages and profit system.

Recovery For Whom?

The press and TV are lauding the government for what they are describing as an economic recovery, but what has been a period of boom for the capitalist class has seen a worsening of conditions for many wage earners. 'The cost of borrowing will increase before workers benefit from a real rise in their wages, the governor of the Bank of England said yesterday. Mark Carney said that interest rates were likely to rise from their record low of 0.5 per cent in the spring of next

year, possibly before the general election in May' (*Times*, 10 September). He went on to say to the TUC in Liverpool that inflation-proof wage increases would not arrive until the following summer, indicating a financial squeeze on homeowners with mortgages.

The Drive For Profits

All sorts of well-meaning organisations exist in efforts to stop the deforestation of the Amazon basin, the melting of the Arctic region and other examples of how capitalism worsens the environment. Alas they are doomed to failure. 'The rate of destruction of the Amazon rainforest in Brazil has increased for a second year running. Brazilian government figures show deforestation was up by 29% in the 12 months up to the end of July 2013. Satellite data showed that almost 6,000 sq km (2,315 sq miles) of forest were cleared during that period' (*BBC News*, 11 September).

In its ruthless drive for profit capitalism cares little about the environment.

A Crazy System

It was just a short article in the daily press but it sums up what a crazy system capitalism really is. 'A treasure trove of art, jewellery and other valuables from the estate of the reclusive heiress Rachel "Bunny" Mellon will go on sale at auction following her death earlier this year at the age of 103. Experts invited to assess her collection at her country home of Oak Spring Farms, in Upperville, Virginia, were stunned at the scale of the riches she had amassed, including little-seen Picassos and Van Goghs, personalised Chanel handbags and even a vintage 1950s fire engine' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 14 September). Mellon never worked for this fortune, she inherited her vast wealth from her grandfather. It is estimated that her fortune is probably worth about \$100 million although countless hard-working people are trying to survive on less than \$2 a day.

Class Contempt

It is always interesting to know what the owning class think about the working class and Michael O'Leary the outspoken CEO of Ryanair makes no secret of his contempt. 'MBA students come out with "My staff is my most important asset". Bullshit. Staff is usually your biggest cost. We all employ some lazy bastards who need a kick up the backside' (*Times*, 16 August). This contempt is staggering when all the owning class's profits including Mr O'Leary's are the result of the exploitation of the working class.



FREE LUNCH

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